

*Creativity, Care,
and Communities:
Making Visible Connections*

Dress & Body Association
annual conference

November 2-3, 2024

Our Mission Statement

“Dress” is a highly inclusive concept that includes all varieties of body supplements and body modifications* found in human cultures around the world. It is not limited to clothing, costume, or fashion or to any particular time, place, or economic structure. The mission of the Dress and Body Association (DBA) is to bring together scholars from diverse disciplines and areas of the world to share academic research about dress and body practices understood broadly, to offer quality opportunities for networking, and to forge links with like-minded individuals and organizations.

The Dress and Body Association is based entirely online, an essential structure for

- 1.Flexibility: In-person conferences are cumbersome and expensive to plan, which makes them difficult to change or adapt to new circumstances.
- 2.Accessibility: Travel is expensive and time-consuming. Many scholars cannot afford to travel. Even scholars with funding may have restrictions due to caretaking responsibilities, health issues, difficulty obtaining a visa, etc.
- 3.Inclusivity: ‘Dress and the body’ is a subject that pertains to all human cultures; the DBA is committed to including scholars from diverse disciplines and areas of the world.
- 4.Sustainability: International travel is not only expensive, but harmful to the planet. Online activities reduce consumption and waste.

*Joanne B. Eicher (2000), “Dress,” *Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Women’s Issues and Knowledge*, edited by Cheris Kramarae and Dale Spender, New York, Routledge: 422-423.

The Dress and Body Association is registered as a non-profit organization (501(c)(3)) in the state of Indiana (United States). Donations are tax-deductible.



2024 Dress and Body Association Conference

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Dress and Body Association invites submissions for the organization's fifth annual conference, **which will be held on November 2-3, 2024**. Consistent with our long-term goals for inclusivity and sustainability, all activities will be 100% online, including keynote speaker(s), research presentations, and opportunities for virtual networking.

Visit the DBA website—www.dress-body-association.org—to learn more about this organization and consider becoming a member.

Creativity, Care, and Communities: Making Visible Connections

The body is an intensely personal site for creativity and self-expression, yet even the most unique styles of dress reflect larger communities—people, places, and legacies that we care about and draw inspiration from. Whether we understand them as 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1989), 'communities of practice' (Wegner 1998), or something else, we as artists, designers, activists, educators, and scholars give to and take from communities. We often make our connections visible through material culture such as (but not limited to) clothing, jewelry, headwear, footwear, and body modifications.

Proposals on any topic related to dress and the body will be considered, but those related to this year's theme are most likely to be accepted. Individual and collaborative presentations are welcome, as are suggestions for roundtable discussions. Topics might include:

- Communities of wearable art (e.g. Burning Man)
- Dress as a medium for experiencing and (re)mediating history
- How intellectual property laws constrain dress practices
- Community engagement in fashion exhibitions
- Decolonizing and reclaiming dress practices
- Cosplay as connection and expression of media fandoms
- Artistic legacies in jewelry-making, hairstyling, tattooing, etc.
- Evidence of communities from archaeological study
- Embodied activism within activist communities
- Technologies for community formation and repair
- The shaping of artistic and athletic bodies (e.g. dancers)
- Subcultural identities linked with dress and the body (e.g. punk, goth, etc.)

Both beginning and advanced scholars are welcome. Abstracts should be 200-300 words. Presenters do not need to submit a paper before the conference. Depending on the number of submissions and the time zones of presenters, each person should have approximately 20 minutes to speak with additional time for discussion.

Although we welcome scholars, educators, artists, designers, and activists from any country, the language of the conference will be English. We will consider a panel in another language if there is sufficient interest from a group of potential presenters.

Abstracts must be written in English and should be drawn from your own, original work. We ask that presenters not simply recycle presentations from classes or other conferences. Pre-recorded presentations are allowed, but presenters must join the Zoom meeting to hear other speakers and participate in the discussion in real time.

Please submit your abstract by July 1, 2024. All submissions will be read by at least two reviewers in a single-blind review process. If there is no extension on the deadline, authors can expect letters of acceptance by mid-August.

Registration through the DBA website will be required for access to the online platform. Donations are welcome, but not required to participate. The recommended donation is 20 USD for students and early-career scholars, 50 USD for mid-career and senior scholars. All funding goes to the maintenance of our website.

To submit an abstract: dress-body-association.org/abstracts

To register for the conference: dress-body-association.org/conference-registration

The Dress and Body Association is registered as a non-profit organization (501(c)(3)) in the state of Indiana (United States). Donations are tax-deductible.

Dress & Body Association | dress.body.assoc@gmail.com

Important information!

Our schedule is based on GMT, but some participants will have to adjust for changes due to daylight savings:

Nov. 2nd	Cities	Nov. 3rd
GMT -7	Vancouver, Los Angeles	GMT -8
GMT -6	Oaxaca	GMT -6
GMT -5	Chicago	GMT -6
GMT -4	New York, Toronto	GMT -5
GMT -3	Brasilia	GMT -3
GMT 0	London	GMT 0
GMT +1	Brussels, Berlin, Warsaw	GMT +1
GMT +3	Moscow, Ankara	GMT +3
GMT +5	Tashkent	GMT +5
GMT +5.5	Kolkata, New Delhi	GMT +5.5
GMT + 8	Shanghai	GMT +8
GMT +11	Melbourne	GMT +11
GMT +13	Auckland	GMT +13

I have included the home time for each presenter on the abstract page, but please double check your times!

Zoom link for Day 1:

Back up link, just in case:

Zoom link for Day 2:

Back up link, just in case:

Schedule of activities

Live from the United States, starting Saturday, November 2nd

16:00 GMT	Welcome, troubleshooting, networking
16:30-18:00	Group 1: Maya Kirkpatrick, Julia Bozzetti et. Al, Jaquelin Pedraza
18:00-19:30	Group 2: Arthur Urbano, Emma Hodgson, Carrie Yodanis
19:30-21:00	Group 3: Mosunmola Adejo, Jamie Jelinski, Laura Elena Mora Navarro
21:00-21:30	Publishing opportunities
21:30-23:00	Group 4: Margot Rashba, Noah Gallego, Cerys Dallaway Davidson
23:00-00:30	Group 5: Jonathan Lee, Nancy Yu, Winter Greet

Live from Norway, starting on Sunday, November 3rd

9:00-9:30	Welcome, troubleshooting, networking
9:30-11:00	Group 6: Bahar Gürsel, Debasree Sarkar, wang jiamin
11:00-12:30	Group 7: Alisa Barannikova, Aditi Basu, Jayasree Mukherjee
12:30-13:00	Publishing opportunities
13:00-14:30	Group 8: Rike Zollner, Ksenia Gusarova, Minna Jose
14:30-15:30	Keynote: Heather Akou
15:30-17:00	Group 9: Colette Dobson and Catherine Dineley, Ebba Van der Taelen, Helga Behrmann
17:00-18:30	Group 10: Keren Ben-Horin, Andrea Feeser, Katarzyna Kociolek

Keynote Lecture

A Year of Turmoil: Perspectives from a Scholar of Dress

2024 has been one of the most challenging and turbulent years in my career. On the surface, it has also been one of my most productive, with the publication of my monograph, *On the Job: A History of American Work Uniforms*, my first solo-curated exhibit, *Divine Adornment: Community Stories of Belonging*, the launch of my virtual museum, uniformhistories.us, and the imminent publication of my first creative nonfiction book, *Afterthought: A Family Story*.

Paradoxically, I was arrested on my campus for peacefully resisting the Indiana State Police, who were threatening students with automatic weapons for protesting the war in Gaza. The invitation to curate my exhibit—which humanizes Muslims and other people of faith through the lens of dress—arrived after the cancellation of an exhibit by a Palestinian-American artist Samia Halaby for “security” reasons. Currently, I am under threat of being fired for violating a new campus policy that silences all expressive activity between 11pm and 6am. As a result, the ACLU is suing my university for violating my rights under the First Amendment of the US Constitution. It has been a year full of both awful and beautiful surprises.

Dr. Heather Akou is a historian of fashion, dress, and the body. Her research interests include African dress and fashion, contemporary Islamic fashion, working-class histories of dress in the United States, uniforms, lawmaking about dress and the body, secret society regalia, and the politics of museum collections. She teaches primarily courses in fashion studies including fashion history, fashion theory, cultural aspects of dress, and autobiographies of dress and the body. Dr. Akou is the co-founder and co-director of the Dress and Body Association and serves on the editorial board of *Dress* as well as the editorial advisory board for Bloomsbury Fashion Central.

Connect with me through ResearchGate plus:
www.heatherakou.net and
www.uniformhistories.us



Abstracts (in order of speakers)



Maya Kirkpatrick

Kent State University, mkirkpa9@kent.edu

16:30 GMT / 12:30 in the United States (Ohio)

Polleras of Resistance: Photographic Series on Cholita Women as Indigenous Feminist Icons in Contemporary Bolivia

A Cholitas dress has become a paramount symbol for Indigenous movements in response to anti-Indigenous, neo-colonial forces that control Bolivian cities and resources. Despite its pivotal role in Bolivia's Indigenous history, Cholita women's presence in Bolivian visual culture has been understudied in art historical discourses. As Indigenous movements gained momentum in Bolivia's art world since the election of Evo Morales (the first Indigenous president) in 2006, Cholitas became a central emblem of resistance, embodying the rich cultural presence of the Indigenous Andean woman. Production of international photographic series started identifying the historical movement witnessed in Bolivia's cities as Cholita women began gaining access to jobs and visibility in Bolivia's cultural landscape on their terms.

This thesis analyzes artists who have reintroduced Cholitas in Bolivian visual culture into the international Indigenous Feminist discourses. These artists recognize the necessity of Cholitas for advancing Indigenous rights movements while contextualizing Bolivia's Indigenous identity as fundamentally feminist. By providing a platform to highlight the unique stories of the Cholita women, these artists address the need for diversification within global feminist and Indigenous studies. The impact of these photographs extends beyond aesthetic documentation. They serve as a call to scholars and artists alike, urging continued support for the Cholita women's mission during this crucial time in Bolivian history.

A rectangular banner with a teal background. It features several dark teal handprints of various sizes scattered across the surface. The text is overlaid on this background in a white, sans-serif font.

**Julia Bozzetti, Carolina Fernandes da Silva,
and Eileen O'Connor**

**Federal University of Santa Catarina, juliabozzetti@gmail.com
14:30 GMT / 13:30 in Brazil**

Brazilian Women Olympic Athletes on Instagram: Clothing and Gender at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro

This research aims to understand how Brazilian Female Olympic athletes express their subjectivities through their clothing on Instagram posts during the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Specific research objectives are to: a) identify gender identities in the composition of the Brazilian delegation's uniforms for the 2016 Olympic Games; b) analyze how athletes use uniforms as expressions of subjectivities and gender identities; c) interpret if and how elements of individualization are produced through clothing and accessories. Drawing on the work of Jonge, Nesbitt, and Sabiston (2020), the emphasis of social networks on visual representation highlights clothing as a channel for investigation and debate, serving as a way to explore the ways in which an individual's identity is expressed. Moreover, clothing is based on ideals of femininities and masculinities, which constitute performative elements of genders (Cotta and Farage, 2021). Focusing on the 2016 Olympic Games will allow exploration of the use of Instagram for image sharing in the context of analyzing how Brazil would like to be seen by the world and the ways in which athletes were in the spotlight in their home country, facing cultural and social expectations. The theoretical framework of this research is based on the deconstructivist approach (Booth, 2005, 2009) of postmodern history (Jenkins, 2009) and the theory of gender performativity proposed by Judith Butler (2003). Qualitative data collection will include analysis of Instagram profiles of athletes who have public accounts and participated in the 2016 Olympic Games. With the aid of the qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti, the analysis of the collected material will be conducted through iconographic analysis (Panofsky, 1989) and discourse analysis (Foucault, 1996). In this way, Instagram will be examined as a digital tool for the representation of historical information online and subject to analysis (Osmond and Phillips, 2015).



Loteria!: Symbolism in a Border Community

When my grandmother's 84th birthday came around, she wanted her celebration theme to be her favorite hobby, La Loteria. A week before, I received a hurried call from my mom to pick one out of fifty-four loteria characters for a personalized shirt, hoping it would arrive on time. Under pressure, I found myself stuck between la dama (the lady), el borracho (the drunk man), el corazon (the heart) and la estrella (the star). I wanted to pick the one that perfectly encapsulated me as a person, which made me realize how symbolic these characters were to my community. La Loteria Mexicana is a game similar to bingo that incorporates colorful cards with images of different animals, objects and typical Mexican characters. The cards are called out by a person who is able to say a creative phrase that describes the character rather than directly naming it. This makes the game a very engaging family tradition.

The border county of Hidalgo, located in south Texas where I am from, is over 90 percent Mexican descent. A large part of the population had to give up most—if not all—of what they had to travel to the US in search of a better life. This not only meant a drastic change of lifestyle but a disconnect from everything and everyone they left behind. A change that could last a lifetime.

This traditional game is used as a medium to reconnect with our collective roots. The characters on loteria cards inspire families to create wearable art such as caps, bags, clothing, party decorations, and more. These characters represent not just a game, but a vibrant celebration of our heritage and traditions, and it helps many people experience a little piece of home no matter how far away they are.



The Robe of Socrates: Creating and Distinguishing Philosophical Communities in the Ancient World

In a 1995 study titled *The Mask of Socrates: The Image of the Intellectual in Antiquity*, the art historian Paul Zanker traced the history and evolution of the portraiture of philosophers, poets, and others in the ancient world who were associated with learning and culture. The philosopher Socrates (c. 470-399 BCE) set an iconic (and fluid) precedent accessible through literary descriptions and visual representations of his facial features, condition of his body, and the clothing he wore. While Zanker's study briefly treats dress, his study focuses largely on how ancient portraits used facial features to express different philosophical views.

In this paper, I shift attention to the dress of the philosopher. While Socrates wore the standard draped mantle of the ancient Athenian man—the himation, he wore it in such a way that became emblematic of the physical and moral austerity of the philosophical life: wearing the same garment all the time, it became visibly worn out and threadbare, such that it acquired its own name, the *tribōn* (Greek for “worn out”). In subsequent generations, the *tribōn* became standard dress for members of philosophical schools, which claimed descent from Socrates, even when these schools professed different and competing philosophies. Thus the legacy and the “look” of Socrates were matters of competition among ancient intellectual communities.

In this presentation, I will present literary and material evidence that illustrate some aspects of the dynamics of this competition, including sartorial debates between the Cynic and Stoic schools, as well as how early Christian intellectuals waded into this debate.



Athleisure and the Moral Imperative to Self-Optimize

This paper explores athleisure as a material embodiment of neoliberal expectations and ideals. Characterized by its unique ability to blur boundaries, athleisure bridges fashion and sport, optimizing both performance and appearance for the everyday wearer. It is designed to be comfortable, resilient and flattering; it is simultaneously quotidian and an indicator of capital, a signifier of the “desire to have an optimized life” (Tolentino, 2019, p. 82). The dominant narrative surrounding athleisure clothing is one of freedom and women’s rights. Its predecessor, sportswear, was born in the mid 1800s out of a desperate need for women’s activewear. Indeed, athleisure evolved throughout the twentieth century alongside social progress and, in many aspects, its development centred women.

Tracing its inception from uniforms to sportswear, to the invention and application of synthetic fibres, a second narrative emerges: one of self-surveillance, aesthetic labor and aspirations toward a thin-fit standard of beauty. Through the writing and critical praxis outlined in this paper, I hope to problematize athleisure by highlighting how it impacts perceptions of the self. My critical design work brings together self-tracking, athleisure and parody branding in the form of a faux brand, Vye, and a prototype of its clothing. Built on neoliberal tenets, Vye leverages negative reinforcement to motivate its wearers (Vybers) through public shaming. Parodying existing technologies and commercial brands, the project aims to promote questioning around the self-surveilling practices we regularly engage in, as well as the levels of self-optimization we are consistently incentivized to strive for. Kranzberg (1986) writes that “technology is neither good, nor bad; nor is it neutral” (p. 545). Athleisure clothing is one such technology.

Supervisor: Gabi Schaffzin

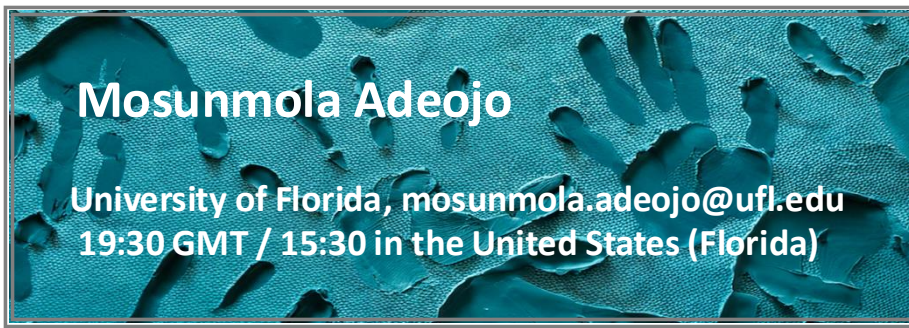
Advisor: Angela Norwood



Cut, Clarity, Color, Carat....Connection: The new meaning of engagement rings

The engagement ring long symbolized heteronormative inequality in relationships: the man bought the ring for the woman he had chosen to marry. The bigger the ring, the better he could financially provide for her. The woman could say yes or no to the proposal, but she couldn't question the ring. She could try to influence his choice subtly, but if he ignored these signs, she was supposed to accept and wear the ring that he had bought for her for the rest of her life. Professionals in the wedding industry still advise women to wait and try to learn to love a ring they hate. Don't complain, they say, especially about the size of the stone; that will insult his masculinity.

This talk provides a sociological analysis of the changing symbol of the engagement ring. Using data from social media discussions of the process of deciding on a ring, there is a shift from rigid externally defined unequal gendered roles to fair negotiation and equality in the connection between partners, paralleling theorized changes in the institution of marriage. When giving feedback online, people argue that deciding on the engagement ring requires communication, compromise, and finding solutions together as a couple. The new expectations involve having equal roles in choosing the ring. For opposite-sex couples, the man needs to listen and learn about what the woman likes. If she wants a more expensive ring than he can afford, she should contribute her income to purchasing the ring. No more decisive breadwinner and quiet dependent; it is an equal partnership. The engagement ring in this way has become a test of a healthy relationship. If the couple can't work together on the ring, how can they work together in marriage? This talk concludes by considering if these changes themselves are merely symbolic.



Innocent Bodies, Colonial Lenses: Children's Agency in Colonial Postcards

This paper examines the complex relationship between children's agency and colonial representation in early 20th-century photographic postcards. By interweaving personal anecdotes with archival research, I explore how images of naked or partially clothed children reflect cultural norms, power dynamics, and the commodification of Indigenous bodies under colonialism.

The paper begins with a childhood recollection of nudity in a non-Western context, illustrating the cultural shift towards Western notions of modesty. This personal narrative provides a framework for analyzing historical photographs of naked children circulated as postcards during the colonial era.

I investigate collections such as the Underwood and Huxley collections in Bristol archives, which contain numerous images of naked children in colonial settings. The language used to describe these photographs, often employing "cheeky" labels or quotation marks around "dress," reveals the photographers' attempts to exoticize their subjects. The paper also highlights instances of agency, such as women covering themselves when confronted with the camera, demonstrating resistance to colonial intrusion.

The research draws connections between these images and broader issues of child labor and exploitation in colonial contexts, as evidenced by photographs of child workers serving colonial officers. By critically examining these visual artifacts, the paper examines the concept of "photographic imperialism" seeing as the camera becomes a tool of exploitation. In addition, the paper uncovers the power dynamics at play and sheds light on how children's bodies were used to construct and reinforce colonial narratives during the colonial era.

Overall, this study contributes to understanding colonial photography, childhood studies, and the historical construction of race and ethnicity through visual media. It challenges us to reconsider the ethics of representation and the enduring impact of these images on perceptions of non-Western cultures.

Keywords: Photographic Imperialism, Child agency, Childhood nudity, Visual ethnography



Six 'Tatouages Conservés': The Implications and Afterlife of a Murdered Woman's Skin

During 1929, Mildred Brown was killed in a Montreal speakeasy. Dr. Wilfrid Derome, founder of Quebec's forensic crime laboratory, was tasked with investigating Brown's murder. During the woman's autopsy, the doctor carefully cut six pieces of tattooed skin from her body. This paper explores the historical and contemporary implications of this act, analyzing the resulting textual and visual documentation alongside the varied contexts in which these tattoos have been displayed and concealed.

Accordingly, I examine bureaucratic and legal endeavors by Quebec government mandataries in law enforcement, medicine, and museums. Their aim is to limit access to these pieces of preserved tattooed skin and suppress information about how they were obtained and past instances of dissemination and display. I discuss alternative methods employed to study the tattooed skin fragments and the treatment of Mildred Brown's deceased body, specifically through federal and provincial access to information requests and legal proceedings at the Commission d'accès à l'information du Québec. Consequently, I present a two-fold argument. Firstly, advocating for the use of access to information legislation as a cross-disciplinary research methodology. Secondly, I highlight that the main reason for obfuscation by authorities is because Brown's tattooed skin is exemplary of Derome's more systematic collection and display of human remains from the bodies of murder victims—a largely ignored facet of his career that conflicts with the sanitized, heroic narrative regularly presented by Quebec's official institutions.



Laura Elena Mora Navarro

Universidad Anáhuac Oaxaca, lauramora.studio@gmail.com

19:30 GMT / 13:30 in Mexico

Wearing Mexico: Colonialism in Mexican fashion and its performances

An unequal relationship determined by colorist and sexist criteria disguised as a discourse of national tradition shapes the ethnic performance of Mexican fashion. This research seeks to define how fashion collections inspired by the style known as Mexican (or ethno-chic) present and market themselves. The marketing of ethno-chic clothing reveals the 'malinchism', sexism, and racism with which the white and mixed-blood population regards the objects. Even though there have been previous investigations regarding the discrimination suffered by various Indigenous communities and their objectification in society, the Mexican fashion industry's marketing of that image as its own and as part of its identity lacks a formally published study. The historical, economic, cultural, and social study of the phenomenon of white-washing Indigenous identities would shed light on a situation that draws from them and perpetuates idealized stereotypes of Indigenous peoples by using them as reserves of the country's identity and keeping them that way. Hence, they continue to fulfill that function. Through the marketing and staging of products sold as ethnic, the primitive narrative of these communities remains alive, serving only as part of our past but not of our present history.

Keywords: Ethnic, Indigenous body, Indigenous fashion, miscegenation, Mexican fashion, decolonization.



Vivienne Westwood, Alexander McQueen, and Scottish Identity in Dress

In 1995, British fashion designer Alexander McQueen shocked the fashion world with his innovative and provocative collection titled Highland Rape. A runway show that featured barely clad models wearing torn and ripped clothing, McQueen's collection confronted the legacy of Scotland's romanticization and highlighted the traumatic history of the Highland Clearances. McQueen positions himself against Vivienne Westwood, who is best known for incorporating tartan in her 1970s punk clothing and for lampooning the British aristocracy. Yet McQueen's designs were personal, drawing from his Scottish ancestry and emphasizing tartan as a Scottish rather than British symbol. On Westwood's work he stated that tartan and its history was more than, "swathes of unmanageable chiffon." This paper compares the use of tartan on the runway in Alexander McQueen and Vivienne Westwood's collections during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries to argue that dress and fashion were sites of debates about Scottish and British identity. Tartan is a poignant tool to evaluate Scottish national identity given its tumultuous history of rebellion and assimilation. Dress figures prominently in debates about Scottish identity in the 1990s. Tom Nairn famously derided tartan as a symbol representative of Scottish nationalism, labeling the issue as the "tartan monster." Moreover, both Westwood and McQueen produced their collections during conversations about Scottish devolution that culminated in the establishment of a parliament in Edinburgh in 1999. Drawing on scholarship in dress, Scotland, and national identity, I argue that McQueen and Westwood's designs participate in political conversations. While historians often overlook dress as a tool for people to work out questions of identity, I view dress as a legitimate arena to analyze the dissemination of political and cultural ideas. In doing so, I contribute to scholarship on dress and identity and posit dress as a means to process complex constructions of British identity.



Vision Things: Eastern Intersections in Gothic Fashion

In my research on the Gothic, I have found that the Orient, broadly conceived as those territories east of Europe, preoccupies the field in all its facets: its literature, cinema, music, but most starkly, in its fashion. After all, no trad goth outfit seems to be complete without at least one accessory featuring an icon from eastern culture, whether that be the ankh or the wedjat (Eye of Horus) from Egyptian mythology. A cursory search on Pinterest or the popular dark alternative clothing site, KILLSTAR, will reveal a surprising frequency of eastern iconography featured on Gothic jewelry. In my investigation of what I call the Eastern Question, I argue this bricolage of non-Western symbols attests not only to Goth's long yet unexamined Eastern pedigree but to a larger subversive project which stakes its most visible claim in one's apparel. By examining a series of images of Goths from the past four decades across various media, from the subculture's inception in the 1980s until the present-day (2020s), it will become clear that the East's role as a historical marker of difference continues to operate as a rhetorical source for Goths to sartorially dis-identify themselves from the mainstream and signal their alterity.



What Our Clothes and Their Associated Material Culture Tell Us About Our Public and Private Lives

Garments are holders of information on our personal and public lives. We imprint aspects of our bodies onto the fabric through staining, wear and alterations, whilst sharing the public persona of that body to the world through messaging on the external clothing surface. Pocketed garments provide additional receptacles for information of the wearer, whether privately tucked within or placed there in partial display as desired. These items are often personal, whether consciously chosen for presentation to the world or inadvertently popped quickly into a pocket and forgotten. In connection with the garment's biography, they offer insight into the clothed individual and their connected communities. This unique intersection where dress and other material culture collide, is a valuable space for enquiry.

This paper will share some case studies from research currently in progress with the University of Waikato, New Zealand, exploring creative and dress history-based methodologies which place the garment and its connected artefacts as primary source for enquiry. Utilising museum collections and second-hand garments with found pocket contents or other physically connected objects, this work explores the garment and related biographies which are revealed within this collision of material culture. Findings from a range of dress artefact include business cards, unused expired condoms, bowling club badges, hair combs, breath mints and bobby pins, all object-based data which shares insight into community connections, individual, social and object histories.



The Matrix of Nostalgia-Diaspora Axes: Fashion, material culture, and Hong Kong identity in the 2020s

As part of the master's thesis, titled "Nor East nor West: The Existential Crisis of Postcolonial Hongkongers in the 2020s through a Lens of Fashion and Material Culture," this research piece takes objects of fashion from Hong Kong as a vantage point to interrogate the cultural identity of Hongkongers in the current decade. Since the 2019 Anti-Extradition Bill protest, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government have been imposing laws to suppress freedom of speech among the local, if not the diasporic residents. As a result, the city has been undergoing a tremendous change sociopolitically, economically, and culturally. The uncertainty faced by Hongkongers eventually led to the massive emigration wave in 2021 amidst the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, inflicting humanitarian concerns.

Through the examination of local fashion and culture in Hong Kong, the objective of this research is three-folded: first, to decolonize the Eurocentric fashion studies by studying East Asian fashion from an East Asian perspective (Jansen 832; Cheang and Kramer 147); second, to decentralize the Sinocentric worldview in the East Asian region by suggesting Hong Kong as a distinctive local cultural entity (Chow et al. 570); and third, to dignify my marginalized and diasporic voice in the authoritarian-ruled Hong Kong (Matua 96). With my primary and reflexive research data gathered from the semi-structured interviews with Hong Kong designers and an autoethnographic curation that I curated, I have then conducted a semiotic analysis on the exhibited objects of fashion and concluded that "nostalgia" and "diaspora" are found as a manifestation of the cultural identity of Hongkongers in the 2020s. Subsequently, to contextualize the research finding, I have theorized this phenomenon into a matrix named the Nostalgia-Diaspora Axes, to interpret the affect embedded within these objects.

Cheang, Sarah, and Elizabeth Kramer. "Fashion and East Asia: Cultural Translation and East Asian Perspectives." *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2017, pp. 145-55.

Chow, Siu-lun, et al. "Development of the Hong Kong Identity Scale: Differentiation between Hong Kong 'Locals' and Mainland Chinese in Cultural and Civic Domain." *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 29, no. 124, 2020, pp. 568-84.

Jansen, M. Angela. "Fashion and Phantasmagoria of Modernity: An Introduction to Decolonial Fashion Discourse." *Fashion Theory*, vol. 24, no. 6, 2020, pp. 815-36.

Matua, Eddah M. "How I Came to Know: Moving through Spaces of Post/Colonial Encounters." *Globalizing Intercultural Communication: A Reader*, edited by Kathryn Sorrells and Sachi Sekimoto. Sage Publications, 2015, pp. 95-101.



Glass Armour: Cultural Narratives and Personal Identity Through Performance Art

Glass Armour is an endurance performance piece that explores the intersection of personal identity, cultural narratives, and materiality through the medium of glass. As a Chinese Australian artist, my work explores the complexities of transnational identities and the inherited values that shape our sense of self. This performance embodies the theme of "Creativity, Care, and Communities" by making visible the connections between individual experiences and broader cultural legacies.

In Glass Armour, I wear a handcrafted suit of glass armour that weighs 180 pounds, enduring its burden until muscular failure. The glass armour itself is rich with cultural symbolism. The breastplate features bas-relief sculptures of Guan Yu and Zhang Fei, two historical figures from the Three Kingdoms period of China who are traditionally revered for their valour and loyalty. However, I reinterpret these figures to symbolise 'pride' and 'wrath,' highlighting their fatal flaws and downfalls. This subversion of cultural narratives challenges the audience to reconsider the values and traditions that have been passed down through generations and their impact on personal identity as well as the care needed in contemporary collectivistic communities.

Glass Armour engages with themes of pride, shame, and isolation, drawing from my personal experiences and broader cultural contexts. By wearing the weight of cultural expectations, the performance addresses the psychological and emotional burdens that come with maintaining one's identity within a collectivistic culture. The materiality of glass—its transparency, fragility, and mutability—serves as a powerful metaphor for these internal struggles.

Through this presentation, I aim to discuss glass as a medium for wearable art and how its symphony with body performance art can serve as a medium for experiencing and reinterpreting history, identity, and community. The performance not only reflects my personal journey but also resonates with broader themes of cultural inheritance and the quest for self-understanding.



Crafting Ukrainian Identity: Towards A History of the Vyshyvanka

The brightly coloured and delicately detailed “vyshyvanka”, the traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirt, has long been a marker of Ukrainian ethnic and cultural identity. In recent years in particular, the vyshyvanka has become an internationally recognized symbol of “Ukrainianness”; and yet, despite its importance in Ukrainian identity-building and independence movements, remarkably little scholarship exists on this topic. This lack of academic engagement stems in part from twin forms of domination – colonial domination and gendered domination. Ukrainian history has often been overshadowed by Russo-centrism, while the significance of handicrafts practices such as embroidery have been dismissed because of their association with femininity and “women’s work”. Yet, the sheer number of digital images and the proliferation of vyshyvanka-related designs in light of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, warrants greater attention. In this piece, I will explore how and why the uses of vyshyvanka, have evolved over time, charting differences in how the vyshyvanka has been made, worn, depicted, and used, both by Ukrainians and by those seeking to denigrate or deny the existence of the Ukrainian nation. The Ukrainian diaspora, too, has played a pivotal role in the international recognition of “Ukrainianness” and as active preservers of cultural autonomy in times of conflict with Russian. I focus in particular on the explosion of digital images featuring the vyshyvanka, circulating since the Euromaidan of 2013-14, and on the history of the creation of World Vyshyvanka Day, now celebrated on the third Thursday of May and serving as a vehicle for mobilizing solidarity with Ukraine from Taiwan to the UK to Israel.



Self-Expression via Clothing Habits: An Analysis of Early-Twentieth Century Peranakan Chinese Community's Family Portraits

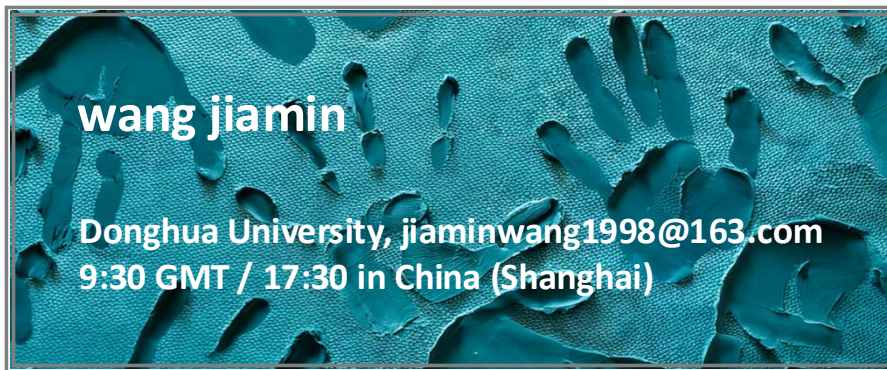
Peranakan Chinese community comprises the descendants of the Chinese immigrants who settled in the Malay Archipelago, and married local women during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Peranakans are known for their distinct clothes, accessories and cuisine, and nyonya and baba are the words that are utilized to define Peranakan women and men. Traditionally, a baju panjang—a loose tunic worn over a sarong (a long piece of fabric)—was worn by nyonyas. In the late nineteenth century, they adopted a hybrid fashion, and started to wear sarong kebaya (sarong and a long-sleeved lace top).

Inside a community, families constitute the smallest units which people care about and draw inspiration from. By analysing a number of early twentieth-century Peranakan Chinese family portraits taken in several Indonesian and Straits Settlements (mainly Penang and Singapore) photography studios, this paper will pinpoint primarily the garments, jewellery, headwear and footwear which were/ are the pillars of traditional Peranakan Chinese dressing style, and also representative of Peranakan identity. Since family portraits provide the opportunity of examining and comparing different generations in a single frame, this paper will also explicate which clothes and accessories Peranakan parents selected for their children. Hence by employing visual primary documents, it will provide a comprehensive assessment of various sources and styles of the innately hybrid Peranakan fashion.



The Tale of the Tip: 'Dotting' the Bengali Women's Cultural Identity

On April 2, 2022, Lata Samaddar, a teacher of Tejgaon College, Dhaka, complained that a policeman harassed and hurled abusive words at her after seeing a tip (a red dot in the middle of the eyebrows) on her forehead, while she was going to her campus. This surprised everyone, and waves of protest arose from all quarters. The tip has much significance apart from being a signature fashion article. Derived from the Sanskrit word 'bindu' (point/dot) and frequently associated with a person's spiritual third eye, the tip or bindi is a part of the cultural identity of Bengali women. Women use the tip in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Burma, the Philippines, and Indonesia, but has especially become a part of Bengali culture. Although this small dot has its roots in the Hindu scriptures, it has transformed over time and across realms, becoming a popular fashion accessory amongst Bengali women, transcending physical and religious boundaries. This paper intends to look at how tip became a cultural marker of identity for the Bengali-speaking community of Bangladesh and West Bengal, India. In 1947, the Bengal was partitioned according to the arbitrary choice of the Radcliffe Line. There are numerous instances where dictates came from conservative Islamist organisations against Muslim women wearing tip, especially in Eastern Pakistan (subsequently Bangladesh), but the Bengali women of Bangladesh, irrespective of their religious identity, continued to wear the tip proudly. Through newspaper articles and social media posts, I will be looking at what tip represents and its interpersonal relationship with the wearer. How do women's bodies, a contested terrain of various socio-cultural identities, become a crucial site of resistance when it comes to the tug of war of ethnic identity versus religious identity, and how do women handle their free choice of self-representation within the discourse?



Clothing as a Medium for Re-mediating History - The Evolution of the Chinese Cheongsam as an Example

This scholarly research paper employs the evolution of the Chinese qipao as a case study to explore the importance and impact of clothing as a medium for reinterpreting history. The qipao, as a prototypical representation of traditional Chinese attire, not only reflects the transformation of Chinese society and cultural shifts but also signifies changes in the status of women and the innovation and continuation of traditional Chinese culture.

By analyzing the historical context, cultural significance, and communicative strategies throughout the evolution of the qipao, this paper aims to reveal how clothing can act as a medium for reinterpreting history. The trajectory of the qipao's evolution showcases the diversity and richness of Chinese historical culture while underscoring the significant role of clothing in cross-cultural communication.

Applying relevant theories from the field of communication, such as semiotics, cultural studies, and media studies, this paper explores the role and influence of the qipao in historical dissemination. The analysis of design innovation, brand promotion, and international communication strategies for the qipao reveals how these communicative practices shape the construction and reception of the qipao's meaning.

Through the case study of the evolution of the Chinese qipao, this paper seeks to emphasize the role and significance of clothing as a medium for reinterpreting history. Clothing is not only a witness to history but can also be a creator and conveyor of historical narratives. By studying and understanding the evolution of clothing, we can better appreciate the diversity and richness of historical experiences.

Keywords: Clothing; History; Medium; Qipao; Communication; Cultural Studies; Semiotics



Alisa Barannikova

Moscow School of Social and Economic Studies, v.rukah@gmail.com

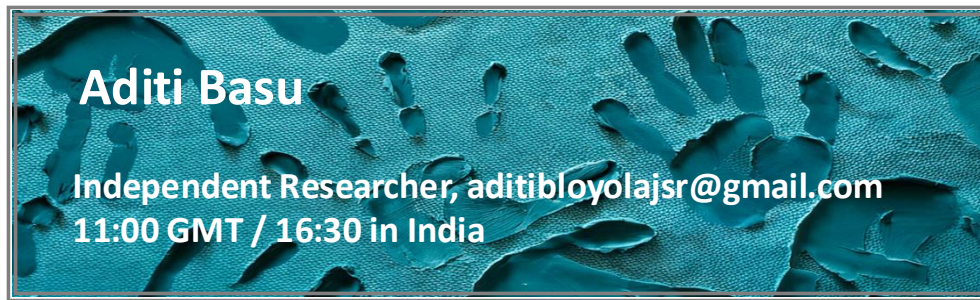
11:00 GMT / 16:00 in Tashkent (Uzbekistan)

Transformation of Traditional Dress and Emancipation of People: The Case of Adras in Central Asia

The key questions I want to raise in my research are the role of intangible cultural heritage in rebuilding the cultural identity of Post Soviet countries and their break from the Soviet experience. My research focuses on the issues of cultural appropriation of heritage and ornamental culture and the transformation from the ordinary in the home region to the luxury in Western countries. My primary focus lies in the production of local fabrics. Firstly, abra fabrics and their production methods are integral to the intangible heritage of Uzbekistan. Secondly, these fabrics are significantly influenced by the Western world, being viewed more as a resource than a finished product. Therefore, abra cloth can serve as a pertinent marker of postcolonial sentiments in the region. This report aims to analyze the social impact of abra cloth production in the region, its diffusion locally and globally, its evolution as a cultural norm, or its decline, and its perception in the fashion world.

Nowadays cultural heritage and hereditary art come out of the shadows and become the object of pride, shame, and trading, a manifestation of their independence and generating many questions. Who is allowed to wear national clothes? How can we use traditional pottery items or ornaments? In my PhD research, I would like to focus on constructing the permissions of the using traditional crafts, understanding how it is possible to recover the importance of traditional crafts in modern being in societies that oriented toward the Western style of living or Russian (post-soviet) values, what is the worth of traditionally in a modern world in common, and how can we rethink the intangible heritage to take him into the future.

The main objective of the study is to identify the potential of intangible cultural heritage in shaping the national identity of a country or region, forming a unique recognizable image based on handicraft arts, and looking at the use of result hereditary art practices through a decolonial lens among the changing cultural and political tensions in the region. Fashion sociology itself delves into the intricate relationship between clothing choices, societal norms, individual expression, and collective identity. It highlights the dynamic nature of fashion as a social phenomenon that goes beyond mere trends in clothing to encompass broader aspects of culture, economics, and personal expression within society. However, in my research, my focus is on exploring how fashion, particularly its narrower aspects, enables individuals to construct their identity, regardless of their affiliation with ethnic groups in Central Asia.



Illustrating Indian Culture in the 21st Century: A Case Study Analysis of Chhau through Masks and Costumes

Most nations all over the world have a cultural past, which is inseparably linked to masks making them a universal phenomenon. Masks from all over the world converge on the universality of the human mind and the power of the human imagination, thereby, forming a silent language which is universally understood and which defines the essence of human expressions and emotions at various levels - spiritual, religious and material. In India, the flavour of masks still remains as fresh as ever even though today, the focus of the use of masks has shifted from the performing arts and religious ceremonies, to the handicrafts market. However, whether it is made of wood or metal or fabric - the mask continues to be a source of mystery and fascination representing Indian folk art - a mode of escape from the drudgery of everyday life seeped in technology and automation. India has a huge range of decorative, festive and ceremonial masks related to the vast repertoire of myths, legends and folklore, which revolve around idolized deities, valiant heroes, and fierce demons.

Traditional indigenous dance forms like the Chhau, already listed in the UNESCO's list of ICH, rejuvenate episodes from epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata in drama, dance and mask forms, bringing life to India's spiritual heritage. The Chhau, a popular dance in the states of Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal, is performed in the spring festival known as Chaitra Parav where costumes of birds, animals and warriors are worn by the indigenous communities and the dance forms to connect India's past with the present. Such art forms have attracted international tourists and students which clearly indicate international recognition and appreciation of Indian art forms. Therefore, cultural assets like Chhau constitute the backbone of Indian soft power which is essential for nation-branding and is popularized by India under its "Incredible India" campaign. The dance is widely popular for its crafted masks and colourful costumes. Because of being economically underdeveloped, these art forms are on the face of extinction and in need of financial support. Therefore, this research argues how Chhau as an art form (through masks and costumes) symbolizes India's varied culture and traditions that have created the nation's identity internationally but, unfortunately, are on the verge of extinction.

KEYWORDS: art, costumes, culture, Chhau dance, folk, masks, identity



Jayasree Mukherjee

Amity University Jharkhand, jayasreemukherjee8@gmail.com

11:00 GMT / 16:30 in India

The Symbolic Inscription of Marital Status on the Female Body in India: A Critical Assessment Through the Lens of Select Women's Fiction

Most of the ethno-religious communities in South Asia have sartorial prescriptions intended for women who are generally grouped into three categories: unmarried, married and widow. Such prescriptions tend not to be systematically documented but are transmitted across generations through time-honoured performative bodily practices. What is particularly intriguing about these practices, apart from their compulsive and prohibitive nature, is the community bonding that it attempts to forge. The initiation of a woman into both wifehood as well as widowhood is ceremoniously executed by groups of women who share the same marital status, thereby underlining the communal dimension of the phenomenon.

This paper makes an effort to study some of such select works of fiction written or translated in English from India and Pakistan that particularly delineate this aspect of the South Asian culture. The texts selected for this study—Cornelia Sorabji's "A Living Sacrifice: The Ganges Valley, 1828" (1901), Shevantibai Nikambe's *Ratanbai: A High-Caste Child-Wife* (1895, 2004), Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haveli* (1977), Iqbalunnisa Hussain's *Purdah and Polygamy: Life in an Indian Muslim Household* (1944), Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's "Clothes" (1997) and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water* (2006)—have been enlisted keeping the time period as well as the ethnic identity of the authors in view so as to ensure a panoramic representation of the scenario.

The paper attempts to read these texts with a view to analyzing the ways in which the female body serves as a cultural semiotic site for the inscription of her marital identity which, in turn, qualifies her for a specific treatment at the hands of her community. It also discusses the cultural perception and philosophy of wifehood and widowhood in various communities in India and the way it constitutes an essential aspect of female identity. Another concern of this paper is look at how a female community bonding is affected through the performance of the rituals in question.



Costume Dramaturgies as a method for communal empowerment

The relationship between garments and the body is studied by academics from perspectives of both fashion and cultural studies. However, when body and garment unite in a distinctively performative context, it adds another dimension, transforming the act of dressing into a conscious act of costuming. Freed from the implications of the quotidian context, garments can be understood as textile objects rather than clothes, which adds a material dimension into the dynamic. Combined with the expressivity of the moving body, this performative play of dress-up holds transformative power for both performers and the audience. Choreographers like Lia Rodrigues and Trajal Harrell weave a complex web of bodies, movement, garments, and textile materials into what I propose as a contemporary costume dramaturgy. I argue that costume is not a singled out material object, but rather the result of particular interactions that evolve between a physical body and a garment/material object within a performative context. It is thus a complex entity of various responsive elements that can be navigated into a powerful dramaturgy. Dancing the act of costuming leads to fluid and effortless experimentation in creating and controlling images and identity, empowering the individual and potentially placing them within a broader community. Both Rodrigues and Harrells work invites bodies of (almost) all kinds – of all ages, colours and shapes – on stage, and employ costume dramaturgical means to turn this dance into a celebration of everyone, as marvellous individuals making a community in a shared experience of joy and empowerment. Considering both the physical body, the materiality, the images provoked, the particularities of their interactions, and the cultural meaning of these relationships is essential to understand the vast potential for empowerment that dancing the act of costuming holds.



Together Against “Eternal Beauty”: From Futurist Face-Painting to “Subversive Stitches”

In 1913, a group of Futurist painters, writers and their sympathizers paraded Moscow with faces outrageously painted in an unheard-of style: their cheeks, foreheads, eyelids and noses were covered with abstract patterns, letters and numbers — the latter so as to bring the human face closer to a numbered façade of a building in a densely packed and yet rationally ordered urban environment. This explanation was offered to the bewildered public in the manifesto *Why We Paint Our Faces* published at the end of the same year in the Russian artistic and literary magazine *Argus*.

The paper will examine the urban aesthetic utopia proposed by the Futurists in opposition to conventional makeup of the time and the beauty canons it reflected. Apart from the visible connections between various members of the group forged through their idiosyncratic body art, I will discuss another artistic project carried out a century later using other expressive means, materials and techniques, but interrogating a similar set of received ideas about gender, beauty and normativity.

Anastasia Bogomolova’s *Lookbook* (2014-2018) is an exploration of the material, visual, ideological and emotional legacy of late Soviet femininity, as it was constructed in prescriptive literature but also, and above all, experienced in women’s everyday lives, desires and dreams. I will focus on one element of this vast project — makeup schemes from advice manuals, embroidered over by the artist — to examine the similarities these “subversive stitches” share with Futurist face-painting, as well as the differences between them.



Fashioning Resistance through Style

From Ester Manas to Dilara Findikoglu, with her Femme Vortex collection, Naked Dressing has become the trend dominating the runway this year. This paper aims to analyse and study the curations within intersections of media, body image, and broader neoliberal culture by integrating a theoretical framework rooted in postfeminist subjectivities. Naked Dressing, in tandem with the bodies adorning them, stripped of their sexuality, creates performative pieces that call for the dismantling of the master's house using the master's tools. Such pieces draw on the elaborate discourses surrounding nudity and the bodies deemed worthy of representation in the mainstream. The paper also analyses the elaborate stylings employed in the Femme Vortex collection, which is described as the manifesto to a new world order devoid of patriarchal appendages. Curated as a headliner-worthy performative piece, Dilara 's work conjures "an ethereal post-masculine world". Drawing on Anna Watkins Fisher's concept of Parasitic Resistance, this paper attempts to analyse such performances as resistive meaning-making through which the artist approaches strategical invisibility that enables them to occupy both positions of influence and invisible resistance. It suggests that resistance is not only about confrontation but involves strategic acts of subversion, adaptation and manipulation within the system. It initially appears identical to the host, gradually revealing its presence. In this context, subversion involves creativity in exploiting loopholes, manipulating narratives, and engaging in symbolic acts of resistance.



Opening Up Conversations: Sex, Cancer and Education Art Textile Activism: Empowering Patients, Challenging Health Professionals and Educationalists

We have undertaken collaborative research seeking to improve communication between patients and health care professionals about the sexual consequences of cancer and its treatment, Art textile pieces were created with the patients with reference to dress and hair for dissemination at medical conferences, in the treatment of patients and support for family and friends. The patients gaining significant benefits in terms of creativity, confidence, and wellbeing.

Building on this successful impact research we are developing a range of challenging garments to encourage conversations with young people in their understanding of sexual development. Research has concluded after patients with vaginal and urinary problems were asked to label a diagram of 7 key parts of genital anatomy– just 9% labelled all seven structures correctly” Linda Geddes.

Using the same diagrams the imagery is woven into designs and printed onto textiles then used to construct garments, which photographed offer visually exciting and thought-provoking images. The key to the collaboration is to communicate, share and involve at all stages of the development allowing a unique vision to evolve.

“ Of those who attempted the labelling – and almost half left this section blank – just 9% labelled all seven structures correctly”

A teal-colored rectangular banner with a textured surface. Several handprints of varying sizes are visible, some appearing as if they are pressed into the surface. The text is overlaid on the left side of the banner.

Ebba Van der Taelen

Independent Researcher, ebba.vandertaelen@live.be
15:30 GMT / 16:30 in Belgium

‘Double activation’ in contemporary jewelry: using the body-jewelry relation to reflect on cosmetic facial surgery and body modification

Contemporary jewelry is a niche within the applied arts, yet recent years there has been substantial theoretical development in this field. However, a particular category of jewelry has remained underexplored: pieces that actively assert their presence rather than merely adorning the body passively. These 'active' jewelry pieces have not been theorized, a gap I aim to address by coining the concept 'double activation'.

According to Kevin Murray and Rock Hushka, every piece of jewelry becomes ‘activated’ when worn on the body. However, I argue that 'double activation' jewelry also ‘activates’ the body, resulting in a second - 'double' - activation. These pieces induce sensations in the wearer's body that would not be experienced without the jewelry. They achieve this through five mechanisms: (1) restricting movement, (2) interacting with body parts and potentially causing pain, (3) manipulating the body's forms, (4) extending the body to generate new sensations, and (5) taking control over the body.

This concept offers numerous possibilities for jewelry creators, such as materializing abstract concepts related to our bodies, including societal pressure. To illustrate the potential of 'double activation', I will present a case study. The examined jewelry pieces respond to a societal trend that started in the 1990s: the popularization of cosmetic facial surgery and body modification. Through 'double activation' jewelry, some makers specifically address the possibilities and dangers of body modification and cosmetic surgery, questioning which modifications certain communities accept and how far we are willing to go in pursuing the 'ideal body'. Jewelry makers like Kumi Kaguraoka (Japanese) and Ada Chen (Chinese-American) reflect on the beauty ideals prevalent in their own cultures and communities. In my presentation, I will explore how they use the concept of ‘double activation’ to – critically – reflect on these ideals and the complicity of jewelry in the ‘quest for beauty’.



Close The Loop – Communities Of Practice

Dressing bodies – one's own or that of others – mean to establish relationships: between the invisible characteristics of a personality and the visible codes of the textile skin. Beyond the trend-related and self-expression processes, clothing has a reference to its material conditions. Getting dressed turns into a conscious action. The current path of sustainability in fashion is about reduction of material, speed, and waste, and that leads to a circular design. Consequently, making, buying, selling, educating, learning and using need to become conscious processes, too. The traditional "Take-Make-Waste" must be changed to "Close The Loop". Not the ingenious artist, but competences and knowledge of technical, aesthetic and social concerns characterize future designers.

This article presents a research project in which design students collect used clothes, deconstruct them, analyze the material components according to raw materials, categorize them and use them for new designs. The focus is on reprocessing as many parts as possible into new collection pieces. Reuse, recycling and visible mending, as well as multi-generation pattern cutting, patchwork and modular principles, are techniques that were developed during the practical phase of the project from the traditional existing processes for surface creation, pattern construction and processing technology. „Close The Loop“ means a design process based on cycles, far away from a pragmatic approach. Rather, the results show that the inner attitude of the creatives is reflected in the collection pieces. These visible codes are transferred to the wearers who share these statements to expand the community.

“Close The Loop” shows that fashion is a visible surface not only to support self-expression, but also to strengthen the appreciation for textile materials and strengthens an awareness in the community to understand the process of reuse as an aesthetic act.



Runway Politics: Fashion Show Activism in 20th Century U.S.

“Runway Politics: Fashion Show Activism in 20th Century U.S.,” investigates how community-organized fashion shows in the U.S. allowed women and marginalized groups to mobilize political and economic power at times when their ability to participate in electoral politics was limited. Rather than treating community fashion shows as ephemeral events meant solely for entertainment, “Runway Politics” analyzes them as sites in which gender performance assumed new political articulations. This paper underlines that fashion shows themselves are key historical moments at which communities became newly politicized and at which gender performance acquired new political meaning. I understand community fashion shows as embodied political practice and argue that they are an overlooked historical site that emerges at critical points in the transformation of the communities I study.

“Runway Politics” demonstrates that fashion shows became a focal social event in communities on the cusp of politicization and traces this history across the 20th century. From Harlem and Chicago’s thriving African American communities in the 1920s; to Jewish American women who organized grandiose shows during the postwar years and used their existing philanthropic networks to raise money for the creation of the new state of Israel; through Boston and Provincetown, Massachusetts, where in the 1970s and 1980s two queer communities — a group of lesbian feminists active in the Fat Liberation movement and a group of self-described crossdressers — reappropriated the fashion show formula to challenge stereotypical depictions of gender non-conformity; and finally to two intersecting groups that organized fashion shows during the height of the AIDS epidemic in New York’s fashion industry, as well as on its margins. By exploring this rich history, “Runway Politics” highlights how fashion shows — considered feminine spaces — served as a means of unscrutinized self-expression, community building, and political activism for women and marginalized groups, including African Americans and LGBTQ+ individuals.



Hummingbirds Make a Cameo Appearance in Victorian Jewelry

Victorians viewed animals as food (through husbandry and hunting); vehicles for allegory (through heraldry, art, and literature); instruments of learning (as objects of natural history and science); pleasure (as pets as well as menagerie and zoos specimens); and prestige (as displayed exotica and luxury goods). These phenomena converge variously in décor and clothing created from animals and their parts: entire and partial taxidermied creatures as well as furs and feathers. The Victorian jeweler Harry Emanuel produced a line of necklaces and earrings made from hummingbird heads that speak to these connections in profound ways that some scholars have touched upon. However, writers have not linked these objects to another Victorian passion: human heads in jewelry that appear in small painted bust portraits of loved ones as well as in Classical cameos and those modeled after them. My paper will establish and analyze these bonds and in so doing argue that mimesis as index in hummingbird jewelry extends experiences of connection and power afforded by cameos and portrait medallions. People who wore the latter two owned representations of those considered important. Women who wore hummingbird heads owned actual body parts that signify the power to kill and preserve in death what is loved. This power, veiled in part by beauty, speaks to Victorian voraciousness and hubris with respect to acquisition and display, whatever the cost.



(Re)dressing the Past - Dress as a Medium for Experiencing History

Clothes often “outlive their wearers” (Garelick 2019). This is particularly evident in museums, where they are used to tell stories and cultivate memories of the past generations. Clothing, like museums in which they are displayed, can be conceptualised as the so-called “memory sites”, and similarly to museums play a significant role in the production and dissemination of various representations of the past. As a result of “memory boom” which triggered interests in reviewing the past traumatic experiences, there has intensified interest in museums as places where identities can be reshaped in relation to the historical narrative (Apsel & Sodaro 2020). By discussing dress and museum in the context of “prosthetic memory” (Landsberg 2004), the paper demonstrates that items of clothing may belong among commemoration practices whose role it is to “sanctify history” (Schwartz 2015). Based on curatorial practices of selected Polish museums that explicitly address difficult or traumatic historical events, this paper examines dress as “a bodily memory” (Landsberg 2004) and investigates its role in mediating individual and collective traumas.

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